

**Opening Remarks by Hon. Charlotte Tessa Mangal  
Minister for Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs**

**Regional Training Seminar on  
Assessing the Economic Contribution and Performance  
of Creative Industries to National Economies**

**SALUTATIONS:**

Permit me first of all, to welcome all of you to Saint Lucia and to this seminar. We feel particularly privileged to host this training exercise as we consider our country to be a cradle of creativity in the Caribbean. We have been blessed with a long line of creative genius highlighted by the accolades bestowed upon Sir Arthur Lewis, the Honourable Derek Walcott, Sir Dunstan St. Omer, Mr. Ronald “Boo” Hinkson, Mr. Jallim Eudovique, Mr. Ricky George, Dame Sessene Descartes, Mr. Adrian Augier, Invader, the Mighty Pep, Alpha, Ricky T and others. You all have your fair share of creative genius which you can also point to, and so we feel honoured to host you and the rich history of creativity that you hold. That history is also a source of immense economic potential.

Saint Lucia’s cultural and creative sector makes a substantial contribution to the county’s quality of life and its economy. This statement, I suspect, is also reflective of the reality in each of our OECS member states. Indeed our cultural diversity gives our Economic Union a unique character and distinct economic advantages.

Today's seminar is being appropriately held under the theme: *“assessing the economic contribution and performance of creative industries to our national economies.”* It is commissioned to show how each county's prosperity and future prospects might benefit most effectively from its significant local creative presence, and also to identify how best to support this important sector.

The results of this assessment will provide evidence for the cultural and creative industries (CCI) sector, to support the case for more effective and concerted action from regional, countrywide and local Business Support agencies, and by the sector itself. It is my expectation that it will help in identifying practical steps which the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, along with local and regional agencies can take to support this important economic and cultural industry in challenging times.

The scope of cultural and creative activities includes businesses, enterprises and practices in advertising; architecture; art and antiques; computer games, software and electronic publishing; fashion; museums and other cultural facilities; music, the visual and performing arts; publishing; radio and television; video production, film and photography. Cultural tourism and heritage, festivals, museums and galleries, community arts organizations, individual artists and crafts people are therefore included, but not the visitor and tourism or the sports sectors.

The CCI sector spans museums and media companies, architects and archives, film makers and festivals, publishers and public art; and is part of the knowledge economy, which is important in enhancing the country's international competitiveness.

Culture and creativity add richness to the lives of our people and a certain distinctiveness to our countries, while playing a substantial economic role. The Government of Saint Lucia's policy, delivered through the National Export Development Strategy established in 2004; provides a supportive policy framework for this. The National Export Development Strategy lists "Arts and Entertainment" (as it was then referred to), as one of the ten (10) priority export sectors. The attention being given within the CARIFORUM region, and the new priorities of the OECS, highlight the importance of such high value sectors including much of the digital economy.

Creative industries have an economic impact that go beyond the confines of the activities as defined in the background papers prepared for this conference. The economic assessment that we are preparing to undertake, should therefore play a pivotal role, in identifying how national strategies should play to national strengths; how partnerships and integrating CCI support strategies into wider prosperity and infrastructure programmes, generate economic benefits; and the importance of demand-led interventions.

The timing of this assessment is therefore opportune for Saint Lucia, as we are about to embark upon the implementation of our National Export Development Strategy. As Saint Lucia is preparing to invest in international promotion of creative industries; it is important to consider the evidence, based on the different impacts that creative industries can have at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. This economic assessment will therefore prove useful, in reinforcing the practical ways, in which the government is already using cultural and creative activity, within the National Export Performance Framework.

Despite being deeply rooted in copyright protection, creative industries are today increasingly relevant in the regional economy. In addition to their contribution to cultural diversity and the enhancement of social values, these industries are at the same time generating wealth, creating jobs and promoting trade. Notwithstanding their significant economic contribution in this regard, it is felt that the true value and full potential of the creative sector has not been sufficiently analyzed.

We can all agree that Creative activities are deeply rooted in the economies of OECS countries, with many individuals working in creative jobs outside the creative industries. The cultural and creative sector (CCI) is also regarded as having a strong 'multiplier' and/or "spill - over effect" in influencing other economic sectors. However, there is a dearth of empirical data to support this assertion. This means that there has not been much documented evidence gathered, to support the case that Cultural Industries contribute positively to local and regional regeneration, beyond their direct economic impact. This does not mean however, that the evidence is not available to make the case.

In light of this reality, the International Trade Centre (ITC) is correct in stating that the importance of such a conference cannot be overstated, and their support, and the collaboration of the OECS Secretariat and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in organizing this conference; are necessary and timely.

In 2003 the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) published a “*Guide on Surveying the Economic Contribution of the Copyright-Based Industries.*” The Guide summarizes existing experiences in assessing the economic contribution of the copyright-based industries to national economies; and offers guidelines to those studying the creative outputs in economic terms. While the main objective of the *Guide* is to produce a harmonized approach to economic surveys in this field; it goes further in providing governments, research institutions and civil society in general, with a practical tool to evaluate the contribution of their copyright sector. In order to capture and understand the contribution and the far-reaching and positive effects of copyright-based industries to their economies, some countries, using the WIPO’s Guide, have undertaken the task of surveying the impact of their own copyright-based industries on their economies. Countries from different continents are engaged in similar studies, including in our region; Jamaica in 2007 and Trinidad and Tobago earlier this year.

The OECS national economies are simultaneously embarking upon this exercise by relying on the expertise of WIPO and the support of ITC studies. It is expected that each country will develop the capability to provide comparable data, thus enabling policy makers within the common economic space to make sound decisions, based on the experience of our geographically and economically diverse set of countries.

The 2010 Creative Economy Report prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) states that a new development paradigm is emerging. This new paradigm links the economy and culture, embracing economic, cultural, technological and social aspects of development at both the macro and micro levels. Central to this new paradigm is the fact that creativity, knowledge and access to information are increasingly recognized as powerful engines driving economic growth and promoting development in a globalized world.

As all would agree, that the creative economy has emerged as a leading component of economic growth, employment, trade and innovation, and social cohesion in most advanced economies. Conversely, countries like Saint Lucia and other developing countries are still struggling to harness our creative capacities for our development. Development planners and economists attribute this phenomenon to the inherent weaknesses in our domestic policy and practices, as well as our general business climate. A general lack of appreciation for empirical evidence has limited our ability to advance feasible development options of the sector and move into high growth areas.

We profess that our human capital resides in the power of our culture, however; we are challenged in the development of our Creative Industries Sector. In Saint Lucia, we are yet to establish a mechanism to trace the impact that the creative industries is having on the domestic economy. The sector is not captured in our system of National Accounts and this is a serious flaw in our economic analysis and planning.

It is also daunting that an island that has produced two Nobel Laureates and continues to showcase talents in the Arts (drama, music, poetry, etc) does not have a coherent plan or platform to harness the talents and create the structures which give form to a vibrant creative industry. Addressing the challenges of assessing the creative economy to properly inform policy-making so that the sector can flourish; provides an opportunity to change old perceptions, by promoting the new reality based on performance. This new reality is not limited to the creative sector but includes the services sector in general.

The development of our creative industries is contingent upon several factors. Firstly, an appreciation by our policy makers of the importance the sector plays in our domestic economy. A clearly defined sectoral policy that articulates the vision for the sector is a key input into that process. Countries like Jamaica continue to demonstrate the real economic contribution of the creative industry, with Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, Usain Bolt and others, representing Jamaican export power.

This tells us, that we should not limit ourselves to showcasing our talents only to visitors on our shores; but rather, we should also be exporting these talents. We have signed on to the EPA which affords us opportunities in this regard. Our traditional economic sectors have become strained and paralysed by the world economic recession and the relevance and potential of the creative sectors have become even more important. We must seize this opportunity and identify what needs to be done.

The legal framework is already in place insofar as we have laws that protect our intellectual property and institutions like ECCO to represent the interests of artistes, musicians and composers. However, either through mis-information or lack of knowledge, we have continued to define creative industries through what is branded in the media and limit it to the narrow confines of artists.

I must reiterate that creative industries span the full gamut of human creative endeavours, ranging from traditional medicines, handicraft, traditional ceremonies and events to creative writing, opera, theatre, architecture, music and dance. Every human being is blessed with skills and talents along the creative spectrum, and it is this broad human participation, which gives the creative industries its appeal as a major source of employment, and a vehicle for development.

Saint Lucia and the OECS are small, but we have accomplished great things and we can continue to do so. Our success will be marked when our creative people are able to maximize their true potential. At that time we will begin to see the true character of Saint Lucia and the OECS, which is reflective of the excellence of our endeavours and achievements. This may be beyond the imagination of some at this time, but when we achieve it, and only then, will we reap the benefits of having invested in policy frameworks and institutions for our development.

May you have a productive seminar and I look forward to working with you to advance the creative industries in Saint Lucia and the OECS.